

# Momentum:

## A Policy Agenda for Accelerating Racial Equity in California's Education Systems in 2022

California is at a crossroads. The state continues to battle a global pandemic, disproportionately affecting Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native American students. Meanwhile, communities of color are leading a movement to force the state's leaders to acknowledge the persistence of racism. However, rhetoric is not enough. On nearly every indicator, California's students of color and students learning English are being shortchanged by the very education systems that should be serving them. While we can point to signs of progress, the fact remains that progress has moved far too slowly for a state as resource-rich as California.

With an influx of new funding and the renewed push to match anti-racist words with actions, California's leaders have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make bold choices that will accelerate racial equity and justice in education. These choices must significantly address the longstanding disparities in educational resources and opportunities that COVID-19 exacerbated. It is crucial that state and local leaders fully and equitably invest in and implement the programs, policies, and practices that communities of color and research have repeatedly shown work for Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native American students. We must seize the momentum of this moment to reimagine and rebuild our education systems in ways that improve these students' outcomes and lead the nation.

This policy agenda presents the statewide actions The Education Trust—West is currently prioritizing. We continue our work to advocate for these policies through research, reports, events, and legislative efforts while engaging with educators, communities, and decision-makers. Leaders must enact these eleven actions if California is serious about recovering from the pandemic while also leading the nation in progressive policymaking to advance racial equity in education.

### Early Learning and Care



Ensure that families of color are engaged and prioritized as local education agencies (LEAs) implement universal transitional kindergarten. Prioritize access for these families as the state expands early learning and care opportunities.



Support early care educators by prioritizing equitable living wages and professional development.



Implement the new Cradle-to-Career (C2C) data system, ensuring it is actionable, accessible, and proactive in addressing long standing shortcomings in early education data availability.



## K-12 Education



Ensure students of color have access to rigorous college and career-preparatory courses, especially in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). This can be achieved by increasing the rigor of course offerings and aligning graduation requirements with the courses students need to be eligible for California public four-year colleges and universities.



Ensure English learners have access to high-quality, culturally-affirming, grade-appropriate curriculum. This should include access to the full range of college and career preparatory courses. State and local education leaders can achieve this by adopting rigorous, accessible instructional materials and providing resources and professional development for educators.



Update and equitably implement the state's mathematics frameworks to provide culturally and linguistically affirming, rigorous instructional guidance for teachers, professional development providers, and curriculum developers.



Recruit and retain more educators of color and bilingual educators through goal-setting and sharing of teacher workforce data.



## College Access and Success



Ensure every student of color in a California public high school who wants early exposure to college has access to the opportunity to do so via dual enrollment courses.



Ensure the state's new financial aid application completion requirement is implemented urgently, and that state aid is available to all low-income students who apply.



Replace all traditional remedial courses in California community colleges with credit-bearing, transfer-level courses, with the option of co-requisite courses and other academic supports.



Enhance access to child care, including campus-based care, for student parents. Additionally, establish better data collection and reporting on parenting student demographics and supports.